[P.160-C]

among the archers from three to 37 huts,[1] but averages about six huts per hunting band (termed "*Lokalgruppe*" by Schebesta, 1948). The net-hunter bands are larger, averaging around 15 huts per hunting band. The particular Epulu band to be considered was an exceptionally large and fluid one, in itself varying from 10 to 30 huts. In practice it often became two hunting bands. Both Schebesta and Putnam agree that hunting bands do occasionally combine for some special hunting project, but that such alliances are temporary and rare. The Putnam material indicates that, even when such an association does take place, each band rigorously maintains its separate identity, building adjacent but separate camps.

Each single hunting band, among both archers and net hunters, has its own defined hunting area, but until more material is available it is impossible to learn in what other ways the forest is thought of as being divided.

1, [See footnote, bottom of p.160-D --Analyst]

[ARCHERS]

422 Certain objects that by their nature are collective property, however, are considered to belong to the finder. This applies mainly to vegetable products, a honey tree, a termite nest, or a nest of grubs or caterpillars. All who help in the gathering are due their share of these products, but the major part goes to the finder.

422 All personal objects made or acquired by an Mbuti are private property. Thus not only the utensils, but the homestead itself, is the property of the wife, who may, if she wishes, pull the hut down as a gesture of defiance. Weapons belong to men; clothes, to each individual. These objects can be disposed of in any way, at will. Petty pilfering is considered as theft, and theft is both forbidden and punished; but Schebesta does not describe any system of punishment.

428 With regard to succession, generally the brothers or the sons, says Schebesta, inherit from a father; sisters and daughters, from a mother.

000 Schebesta (1948, 533) argues that, as the

[P. 186-B]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
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back to the forest and was never again to be allowed to see him or any of his family, but would be well cared for.

On attempting to find this Mbuti Chief, I discovered that he was in fact just an elderly hunter, and that the girl was his granddaughter. The local Mbuti denied any system of chieftainship, but said that they always appointed one person to deal with the villagers, as in this instance. Both they and the villagers claimed that the legitimate heirs to the chieftainship had to be born of either one of these two formal unions, and that in fact the Chief would sleep again with one or the other girl until she bore him at least two boys. They also said that obviously he would not sleep again with his sister (he himself seemed somewhat disgusted at the recollection of his first night as Chief), and so it would be his Mbuti wife who would provide the tribe with its heir.

There are also firstfruit offerings to the Mbuti in this area, and the same elements of respect and of economic unbalance extend right out of the forest into Ruanda and Burundi, even to the Twa in their relationship with the Tussi. For our present purposes, however, the two situations are not strictly comparable.

But however the villagers might rationalize the economic advantages that accrue to the Mbuti, they do not accept the situation entirely passively. They attempt to create some mechanism by which they can exert authority over the Mbuti and compel them to their service. It is quite evident that if the powerful tribal chiefs backed by armed police are unable to pursue the Mbuti in the forest (even the Belgian administration did not attempt to extend their authority this far), the lesser chiefs are going to be that much more incapable of asserting direct political control. Chiefs such as Kachui, Hamadi, Lupao and Nakubai did not even enter disputes concerning Mbuti in their tribunal records, preferring to deal with such cases "directly." I have witnessed a number of such cases, most of them involving alleged theft, or failure to reciprocate in the exchange of food. The Mbuti claim is invariably that the land is his (even when the charge is for theft of property, not of food), and the villager claim is, equally invariably, that the Mbuti are servants of the villagers, bound to them by indissoluble bonds of heredity and by the fact that the villagers "rescued" the Mbuti from the forest. To this the Mbuti may reply that they "dug" the villagers from a hole in the ground and taught them "how to see and smell and hear and talk." If the case involves food, each side claims original ownership of the plantain

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4 ●
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

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tree and the Mbuti alleges that the villager stole the stem by trickery, leaving him only the leaves, so that the villager was able to replant the trees and grow more, but when the Mbuti planted the leaves they just withered and died.[8] It is seldom that the Mbuti deny possession of the stolen goods; what they deny is the act of stealing. But whatever the fact, and however judgment is given, the essential point is that there is no mechanism for enforcing that judgment. Judgment being given by a villager is in my experience without exception against the Mbuti, and orders restitution of the property, or service in lieu. If the Mbuti complies, however, it is merely because in his own estimation it is expedient to do so. If he feels that he has exhausted the goodwill of the injured villager he will simply leave, and thenceforth deal with another villager. If any attempt is made to inflict physical punishment on an Mbuti, or to imprison him, then the whole band will initiate reprisal raids on the plantations of the individual who brought the complaint. This seldom happens, because villagers seek other means for achieving some measure of control over the Mbuti, and it is with those that we shall now concern ourselves.

[8] See Appendix I: "The Legend of the Mbuti Plantation."

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 93]

CHAPTER 8

The Band

TERRITORY

Before we can begin to understand what the Mbuti band is, we have to understand the notion of territory, which is effectively the only concept through which the band can be defined. Insofar as the band is the largest effective political unit, so the widest territorial boundaries that are recognized are those separating each band from the others. As will be seen, there is a current tendency for all Mbuti bands to recognize a loose unity to bind them in common opposition to the villagers, and in this context they will define a correspondingly wider territory, the forest, in which the villagers are regarded as trespassers. At the other end of the scale, the nuclear family has no territorial claims except those held jointly with other families of the same band. An individual may stake his claim to a tree that he knows or believes will yield honey, or to one that promises to provide good bark for making into cloth. A common way of showing that the tree is claimed is by tying a vine around the trunk at shoulder height.

A claim thus made by no means gives the individual or his family exclusive ownership of the tree or exclusive rights to its produce, however. It merely conveys the right for that individual to have the first opportunity for collecting the honey or for cutting the bark. When the honey is collected or the bark cut, it is done collectively and the claimant is subject to all the usual rules governing the sharing of forest produce. He will have precedence of choice and his share will be larger. If he is not on hand when the honey is ready, however, and if he does not signify his intention to come to claim it, his right is forfeited. It may be seen that the advantage accruing from this slight departure from the norm of joint band ownership of the territory and its produce is in no way great enough to detract from the central value of communal territory, but at the same time it is sufficiently

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

621 great to provide some incentive for individual effort and, much more
• 423 important, it also provides some incentive for a wandering member
131 of a band to return to his home territory at least once a year, for the honey season.[1]

The territory of any band is always ample for its needs. That is perhaps the safest way of defining the size of band territory. Never, in any part of the forest, have I come across any complaint of the insufficiency of a hunting territory, in terms of either size or produce. Nor are there sufficient instances of trespass to indicate that any band suffers from inadequate natural resources. In every case that I have investigated the band has been able to define its boundaries by citing rivers, streams, mountain ridges, ravines, caves, or other locally well-
131 known natural landmarks. These boundaries generally extend one
62 day's march in one direction, three days' march in the other. The
423 shorter base is invariably parallel to the line, a trail or road, connect-
484 ing two villages, though it may well overlap it. A "day's march" is
487 the way the Mbuti generally define distance, and in practice this
822 means that the first day in from the base line is the longest distance, extending perhaps as far as thirty miles. Beyond this the territory is less intensively traveled, the trails are more difficult to follow, and the third day in may represent only ten or fifteen miles. The base line, similarly, is comparatively short, being perhaps the least hunted as it is the closest to the village. Also, as the forest in this area will have been penetrated by villagers in search of building materials, it is generally much more difficult to traverse than the virgin forest a mile or so further in.

In using this measure of time and distance, the Mbuti do not think of how far a single hunter could travel in a day, but rather how far the whole band could travel, as if shifting camp. A single man could travel almost twice the distance. This is a small point, but serves as an indication of the way in which the Mbuti see the world around them, in terms of the potentiality of the whole band.

131 The territory of the Epulu band (Map 6) was defined by a series
133 of rivers: the Harama, the Itoro, and the Epulu to the northeast, the east and the south, and by the small Nepussi and a series of hills and caves to the west. As usual, the innermost boundary was the least

[1] This also seems to be the season when bark-cloth manufacture is at its height, perhaps largely because more time is available during this season. But bark cloth is made throughout the year, and fresh sources of the best barks are always eagerly sought and claimed.

A [see page 321 -- Analyst]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

286 women, and although a man will attend to his own net, repairing it
[462] and adding to it, a mother will often make a complete hunting net to present to her son when he gets married.

342 The other major activity that goes on almost every day in any
356 Pygmy camp is the repairing and alteration of the huts. New leaves have to be added, or the old ones changed to avoid leaks. If relatives come to visit, either the house has to be enlarged or a new one built. Whenever this happens there are repercussions throughout the camp, since people will have to change the entrances to their huts to avoid
342 looking directly into the stranger's hut. The entrances also get changed
356 if there are arguments between two families. The two disputants,
578 though they may be next door to each other, will build little "spite fences" between them, so that their huts are turned almost back to back, the walls in effect turning the doorways to face in opposite directions. Then the doorway may face into someone else's hut, and if that family is not in sympathy, their doorway in turn will be changed, and so on.

342 These changes are usually made by the women, since the hut is
462 considered the woman's property. This is one of the strongest points
593 a woman has in arguments with her husband. I have seen a woman
[356] who has failed to get anywhere in a matrimonial disagreement simply
[423] turn around and start methodically pulling all the leaves off the hut. Usually the husband stops her halfway. In this case, however, the husband was particularly stubborn. He waited until she had taken all the leaves off, then remarked to the camp at large that his wife was going to be dreadfully cold that night. There was nothing for her to do, without losing face, but to continue; so reluctantly, and very slowly, she started to pull out the sticks that formed the framework of her home.

By this time the camp was agog, because it had been a long time since anyone had seen a domestic argument carried quite this far. The poor woman was in tears, for she was very much in love with her